

# United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

## NGO Action News

20 May 2020

### Middle East

- On 20 May, [BADIL – Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights](#) reported that on the 72nd anniversary of the Nakba, the NGO and the Global Palestinian Refugee Network (GPRN), in partnership with a number of grassroots movements, organized the lighting of the “Right of Return” torches under the slogan “One People, One Destiny and Our Inevitable Return”. Around the world and simultaneously, Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons lit torches to reiterate their continued demand for the right to return.
- On 20 May, [Adalah – The Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights in Israel](#), [Gisha – Legal Centre for Freedom of Movement and Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights](#) informed that they had sent a joint letter to Israel’s Attorney-General and Military Advocate General, demanding they order the Israeli military to put an immediate end to the harassment of Palestinian fishermen off the Gaza coast and investigate past incidents. The human rights organizations explained that the violence, with which the military enforces the maritime closure on Gaza as a matter of routine, includes measures such as unrestrained use of live fire, sinking of boats, degrading treatment of fishermen, seizure of boats and damage to equipment.
- On 19 May, [B’Tselem](#) published the report “This is Jerusalem: Violence and Dispossession in Al-‘Esawiyah”. The report covers various aspects of Israel’s policy that have created harsh living conditions in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Jerusalem. B’Tselem describes how the Israeli police has been engaged in a campaign of abuse and collective punishment in that neighborhood, and how operations continue despite the social restrictions put in place because of the COVID-19 crisis.
- On 17 May, the [Palestinian Centre for Human Rights \(PCHR\)](#) issued a press release to denounce the ongoing Israeli attacks against Palestinian fishermen, which led to the injury of two fishermen and damage to their equipment. In the same document, PCHR describes similar incidents by the Israeli naval forces.
- On 15 May, [Palestinian civil society organizations including Al-Haq, Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Centre, Ramallah Centre for Human Rights Studies and others](#) issued the joint statement “The Nakba at 72: A Legacy of Settler-Colonialism and Apartheid over the Palestinian People”. The NGOs stated, “As we mark 72 years since the Nakba, the Israeli government’s plan to move forward with *de jure* annexation of parts of the West Bank will become another strategic milestone in Israel’s settler-colonial project” and called for States to

guarantee international justice and accountability by supporting a full and thorough investigation by the International Criminal Court (ICC) into the Situation in Palestine.

- On 15 May, [Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council \(PHROC\)](#), [Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network \(PNGO\)](#) and [Palestinian Digital Rights Coalition](#) issued a joint statement condemning the selection of Emi Palmor, former General Director of the Israeli Ministry of Justice, to Facebook's Oversight Board and raising alarm about the impact that her role will play in further shrinking the space for freedom of expression online and the protection of human rights. The civil society organizations recalled that under her direction, the Israeli Ministry of Justice petitioned Facebook to censor "legitimate speech of human rights defenders and journalists because it was deemed politically undesirable."
- On 15 May, [BADIL – Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights](#) published the position paper "Trump's Vision/Deal of the Century: A Move to End the Palestinian Refugee Issue through Serious Breaches of International Law". The paper provides an analysis of the proposal provided for the Palestinian refugee issue in the US proposal. BADIL explains how the proposal sets out to deny Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons their right to return, property restitution and compensation – all of which constitute serious breaches of international law.
- On 6 May, [Peace Now](#) informed of a letter sent to the Israeli Civil Administration announcing its intention to file a court petition following the announcement by Israel's provisional Defence Minister, Naftali Bennett, of his plans to advance some 7,000 housing units in the Israeli settlement jurisdiction of Efrat in the occupied West Bank.
- On 5 May, the [Association for Civil Rights in Israel \(ACRI\)](#) informed about the success of its petition filed jointly with Physicians for Human Rights and Worker's Hotline for Refugees and Migrants, demanding that an arrangement be made to ensure the health and living conditions of Palestinian workers remaining in Israel during the COVID-19 crisis. Following the letter sent at the end of March, a law memorandum was published stating that employers of Palestinian workers remaining in Israel during the pandemic must provide their employees with health insurance.

### **North America**

- On 27 May, [The Jerusalem Fund for Education and Community Development](#) will host a virtual talk with Rashid Khalidi on his new book "The Hundred Years' War on Palestine".
- On 21 May, the [Foundation for Middle East Peace \(FMEP\)](#) will hold the webinar "Virtual Tour: Silwan and the Role of Archaeology in East Jerusalem Settlement Efforts". In this webinar, FMEP puts the spotlight on the central role played by archaeology in Israeli illegal settlement efforts in occupied East Jerusalem and will host Emek Shaveh's Executive Director Yonathan Mizrahi, who will offer a guided virtual tour of the East Jerusalem Palestinian neighbourhood of Silwan, where Palestinian residents have been subject to serial

evictions and experienced damage to their properties in the shadow of ongoing settler-led archaeological excavations.

- On 18 May, [Americans for Peace Now](#) joined the Progressive Israel Network in a statement on annexation, in response to the formation of Israel's new government, which is officially committed to annexing parts of the West Bank. The organizations stated that unilateral annexation would move Israelis and Palestinians towards a bleak future of never-ending conflict and would make Israel's unequal and unjust legal system in the West Bank formal and permanent. They welcomed the leadership of lawmakers in the US Congress, who are making clear the tremendous threat that annexation poses to the interests and shared values of both the United States and Israel.

### **United Nations**

- On 4 June, the [UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People](#) will hold the UN Forum on "The Question of Palestine: Threats of Annexation and the Prospects for Peace" from 10.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. (New York) via WebEx, livestreamed to UNTV and UN YouTube. Three prominent speakers – Ms. Hanan Ashrawi, Member of the PLO Executive Committee; Mr. Yossi Beilin, Former Israeli Cabinet Minister; Mr. James Zogby, Founder and President of the Arab American Institute – will outline prevailing challenges and formulate recommendations to overcome the current political impasse for salvaging peace prospects.
- On 20 May, [UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov](#) briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East. He warned against the continuing threat of annexation by Israel of parts of the West Bank, which would constitute a most serious violation of international law, deal a devastating blow to the two-State solution, and close the door to a renewal of negotiations, and threaten efforts to advance a regional peace and broader efforts to maintain international peace and security. He explained that recent polls show that the Israeli public is divided on the issue, while countries in the region and many in the international community clearly stated their opposition regarding annexation. He called on partners in the Middle East Quartet – the United States, the Russian Federation and the European Union – to work with the United Nations and quickly come forward with a proposal that would enable the Quartet to take up its mediation role and work jointly with countries in the region to advance the prospect of peace.

*This newsletter informs about recent and upcoming activities of Civil Society Organizations affiliated with the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights of the UN Secretariat provide the information "as is" without warranty of any kind, and do not accept any responsibility or liability for the accuracy, or reliability of the information contained in the websites linked in the newsletter.*



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